Met Office

February 2004

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

A very mild and wet start to the month, but ending cold with widespread frosts and snow, in most areas. Very sunny across most of the UK, except for parts of south-east England and the Northern Isles which had around average sunshine.

Capel Curig (Conwy) registered 260 mm in 48 hours during the 3rd & 4th. Gravesend (Kent) recorded a high of 17.9 °C on 4th, whilst Sennybridge (Powys) recorded a low of - 10.9 °C on 27th. Durris (Aberdeenshire) reported 25 cm, and Glenlivet (Moray) reported 18 cm, of lying snow on 28th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Mostly mild and dry. Wet at first with severe flooding in N Wales and Cumbria. Cold last week as northerly winds brought frost and snow to many areas.

1st to 6th

A vigorous low pressure to the north or north-west brought very mild, wet and windy weather to the region. The rain was often heavy especially in north Wales and Cumbria, where severe local flooding occurred. The Conwy Valley was badly hit as heavy rain and snow melt resulted in some villages being cut off by floods. Capel Curig registered 260 mm in 48 hours during the 3rd and 4th. Gravesend (Kent) achieved 17.9 °C on the 4th while central London reached 17.8 °C.

7th to 10th

A deep low near the Faeroes moved south-east to Denmark. The low's north-westerly airstream brought wintry showers to the north, giving a snow cover over high ground. After overnight frost at first on the 9th and 10th very mild air returned.

11th to 15th

Staying mild or very mild with high pressure over the UK. It was mostly cloudy with occasional slight rain or drizzle with some patchy mist or fog at times, however, there were good sunny periods in western areas later. There was some heavy rain at times in the north-east during the 14th.

16th to 21st

Continuing anticyclonic and generally dry - mild at first becoming colder later. There was a little rain on the 17th and a few showers along North Sea coasts on the 18th. Good sunny periods followed in most places but with a chilly easterly wind. Southern England had some snow flurries on the 20th with rain in the south-west on the 21st.

22nd to 25th

Becoming colder with northerly winds as high pressure receded westwards. A deep depression from Greenland migrated to southern Scandinavia. There were overnight frost and snow showers in many areas later.

26th to 29th

Bands of snow affected Wales, northern England and the east coast areas of England including East Anglia at first, giving significant accummulations of snow in places. Later on the 26th an area of moderate snow moved

across central southern England, with ten to twelve centimetres reported from Bournemouth early on the 27th. Sennybridge (Powys) fell to minus 10.9 °C that same morning; overnight frost became widespread and severe in places. Persistent snow showers during the 27th and 28th gave further moderate accumulations over Wales, northern England and north-east coastal areas, most places, however, saw good sunny periods. Some parts adjacent to the North Sea as far south as Kent also received a few centimetres of snow. There were also some reports of thunder. Wintry showers also broke out over central southern England on the 28th. Boltshope Park in N England boasted 16 cm on the 29th, however, rising pressure restricted snow showers to south-east England that day.

Scotland diary of highlights

Mild westerlies and cold northerlies.

Cold air covered Scotland at first but this was soon swept away by low pressure in the Atlantic driving mild south-west winds across the country. A band of snow moved north-east on the 1st and was followed by a period of heavy rain in the south, with 26 mm at Eskdalemuir. A warm front on the 2nd gave much rain in the west with 59 mm at Sloy and introduced very mild air. The temperature reached 17 °C at Lossiemouth on the 3rd (a new station record for February) and the wind gusted to 83 mph at Fair Isle. The 4th was only marginally less active, with a temperature of 15 °C at Machrihanish, a gust of 75 mph at Lerwick and 34 mm of rain at Loch Glascarnoch.

The low pressure in the Atlantic slowly transferred into Scandinavia and winds veered into the north-west. On the 7th showers in the north and west turned to snow, with gusts to 77 mph at Barra and South Uist. The south became sunny on the 8th as winds turned into the north.

Mild air soon returned, tracking around an anticyclone that developed close to the English Channel. There was 38 mm of rain at Cassley on the 9th but the weather soon settled down to a spell of uneventful mild and cloudy conditions.

A cold front and an associated band of light rain crossed the country on the 13th, following which the high rebuilt over Scotland. The quiet and cloudy weather was resumed.

Another cold front crossed Scotland on the 16th, but this time the following anticyclone was accompanied by clear skies. There was some cloud in the north at first and cloud spread to the south on the 18th. However, the bulk of Scotland enjoyed a few days of sunny weather with light winds and frosty nights.

Northerly winds spread south across Scotland on the 21st and persisted for the remainder of the month. There was a brief interruption on the night of 23rd/24th as a frontal system passed over. Otherwise, the pattern of weather was of sunshine from the central Highlands southwards and snow showers in the north and down exposed coasts. An anticyclone developed across Scotland on the 29th, by which time Glenlivet reported 18 cm of snow on the ground and the temperature fell to -10.8 °C at Loch Glascarnoch.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Mild at first, then cold but very sunny from mid-month.

The second half of the month was very sunny indeed, with some stations recording their sunniest February on record, including Aldergrove, where the February sunshine total topped 100 hours for the first time since records commenced in 1927.

1st to 7th
Mild and wet in most areas, especially on the 1st and 2nd. Very mild indeed from the 2nd to 5th.

8th to 13th
Dry and generally mild but often rather dull.

14th to 24th
Cold with frequent night frosts, but dry and very sunny, especially from the 17th to 22nd.

25th to 27th
Cold with frequent snow showers especially across the north and west, but also quite sunny in many areas.

28th and 29th
Cold, dry and sunny with widespread moderate, locally severe night frosts.

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